

# [***In Holocaust remembrance, Biden condemns antisemitism sparked by college protests and Gaza war***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYX-9B71-DYMD-62KW-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Tuesday decried a “ferocious surge” in antisemitism on college campuses and around the globe in the months since Hamas attacked Israel and triggered a war in Gaza, using a ceremony to remember victims of the Holocaust to also denounce [*new waves*](https://apnews.com/article/jewish-muslim-harassment-increase-f5a3e969f5a213625c224f8ac25538e1) of violence and hateful rhetoric [*toward Jews.*](https://apnews.com/article/jewish-muslim-antisemitism-islamophobia-hamas-israel-us-d4220df14c7a40403ba61781f3f87854)

Biden said that on [*Oct. 7, Hamas*](https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-hamas-rockets-airstrikes-tel-aviv-11fb98655c256d54ecb5329284fc37d2) “brought to life” that hatred with the killing of more than 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians, and warned that, already, people are beginning to forget who was responsible.

The president used his address to renew his declarations of unwavering support for Israel in its war against Hamas even as his relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has grown increasingly strained over Israel’s push to invade the southern Gaza [*city of Rafah*](https://apnews.com/live/cease-fire-israel-hamas-war-rafah-updates), which would surely worsen the already dire humanitarian crisis for Palestinians.

The Democratic president has struggled to balance his support for Israel since the attack by Hamas — the deadliest day for Jews worldwide since the Holocaust — with his efforts to protect civilian life in Gaza.

While acknowledging the ceremony was taking place during “difficult times,” Biden made no explicit reference to the deaths of more than 34,700 Palestinians since the attack by Hamas led Israel to declare war in Gaza. The tally from the Hamas-run health ministry includes militants, but also many civilians caught up in the fighting.

“My commitment to the safety of the Jewish people, the security of Israel, and its right to exist as an independent Jewish state is ironclad, even when we disagree,” Biden said.

“We’re at risk of people not knowing the truth," Biden said of the horrors of the Holocaust, when 6 million Jews were systematically killed by Nazi Germany and its collaborators. “This hatred continues to lie deep in the hearts of too many people in the world.”

Biden steered clear of the upcoming presidential election in his speech. But it played out in counterpoint to former President Donald Trump’s criticism of the incumbent for not doing more to combat antisemitism. Trump has a long personal history of rhetoric that invokes the language of Nazi Germany and plays on stereotypes of Jews in ***politics***.

Biden’s remarks at the Capitol played out as [*pro-Palestinian protests*](https://apnews.com/article/columbia-commencement-protests-gaza-9bb8051253c45947509feb32ced78f8c) — some of which have involved antisemitic chants and threats toward Jewish students and supporters of Israel — rock [*college campuses*](https://apnews.com/article/columbia-commencement-protests-gaza-9bb8051253c45947509feb32ced78f8c) across the country.

“As Jews around the world still cope with the atrocity and trauma of that day and its aftermath, we’ve seen a ferocious surge of antisemitism in America and around the world,” Biden said.

“Not 75 years later, but just seven and a half months later, and people are already forgetting, they're already forgetting, that Hamas unleashed this terror that it was Hamas that brutalized Israelis, that it was Hamas that took and continues to hold hostages," Biden said. “I have not forgotten, nor have you. And we will not forget."

The Capitol event, hosted by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, also featured remarks from House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., and House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York. Holocaust survivors, local youth and elected officials took part in the remembrance ceremony, which included a recitation of the Jewish prayers for the dead.

The campus protests have posed a political challenge for Biden, whose coalition has historically relied on [*younger voters*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-young-voters-marijuana-reclassification-dea-193e97fc2dd7b32b7d7ad50b4ea80aa0), many of whom are critical of his public support for Israel.

Biden said “There’s no place on any campus in America” or any place in America for antisemitism or threats of violence. He added, “We’re not a lawless country — we are a civil society”

In conjunction with Biden’s speech, his administration was announcing new steps to combat antisemitism on colleges campuses and beyond. The Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights was sending every school district and college in the nation a letter outlining examples of antisemitism and other hate that could lead to federal civil rights investigations.

The Department of Homeland Security was moving to educate schools and community groups about resources and funding available to promote campus safety and address threats. And the State Department’s special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism was meeting with technology companies on how to combat the rise in hateful conflict online.

On Monday, Doug Emhoff, the husband of Vice President Kamala Harris and the first Jewish spouse of a nationally elected American leader, met with Jewish college students at the White House about the administration's efforts to combat antisemitism. He heard students describe their own experiences with hatred, including threats of violence and hate speech, his office said.

Trump’s campaign on Monday released a video on Yom Hashoah, Israel’s Holocaust remembrance day, that aimed to contrast the 2024 presidential candidates’ responses on antisemitism.

The video shows images of Trump visiting Israel and speeches he has given pledging to stand with Jewish people and confront antisemitism, while showing footage of the protests on campuses and clips of Biden responding to protesters upset with his administration’s support for Israel in its war against Hamas.

One of the clips shows Biden saying, “They have a point,” but it does not include the next sentence in which Biden said, “We need to get a lot more care into Gaza.”

Biden campaign spokesman James Singer said in response that “President Biden stands against antisemitism and is committed to the safety of the Jewish community, and security of Israel — Donald Trump does not.”

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Associated Press writer Michelle L. Price in New York and Seung Min Kim in Washington contributed to this report.

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